



Insight

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The fabric of our society

Even though more than four decades have passed between President George W. Bush's inaugural address and President John F. Kennedy's address given on Jan. 20, 1961, the message remains the same. America will continue to ensure that liberty rings true at home and abroad. The essence of this ideal is in the very fabric of our society. No matter if the enemy is communism or terrorism, or the threat is nuclear war or bio-terrorism, America, its Soldiers and its citizens will defend freedom and prevail.

On the eve of the first democratic elections in Iraq, our Soldiers are standing with their Iraqi brethren fighting for what is right and just. The past few days have been dark; blood has been shed by both Americans and Iraqis in this struggle. But, the light of freedom will begin to brighten these darkened days.

During his inaugural address, Bush said, "And as hope kindles hope, millions more will find it. By our efforts, we have lit a fire as well - a fire in the minds of men. It warms those who feel its power, it burns those who fight its progress, and one day this untamed fire of freedom will reach the

darkest corners of our world."

In this new struggle, the terrorist, the enemy is faceless. They do not want liberty to triumph because they realize its power. These cowards, who attack their own people and destroy the country's rebuilding efforts, realize their reign of oppression pales in the light of liberty. The enemy is scared and desperate for they realize the best trained Army in the world is at their doorstep.

All the Soldiers and civilians of INSCOM are standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the warfighters during this struggle. They provide the intelligence and support needed to succeed in this fight for freedom, and to secure the democratic process for a people who have never had the right to vote under Saddam Hussein's reign.

Kennedy challenged every American when he said, "And so, my fellow Americans; ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country." Bush reminded Americans of this generation to serve their country and the world, "I ask our youngest citizens to believe the evidence of your eyes. You have seen that life is fragile, and evil is real, and courage triumphs. Make the



DA photo

choice to serve in a cause larger than your wants, larger than yourself - and in your days you will add not just to the wealth of our country, but to its character."

During these times, we also have to remember the families of those who are standing and watching the birth of democracy in Iraq. They are left behind not realizing the fate of their loved ones. I realize the heartache and doubt all of them are enduring, and for that I thank them for supporting their husbands and wives, sons and daughters, allowing them to focus on the mission in front of them. My thoughts are with our Soldiers and civilians as they meet the challenge set forth by their commander in chief.

DFAS overpays 53,000 troops



file photo

An error by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, overpaid more than 53,000 Soldiers around the world this month. DFAS will begin drawing back the overpayments in the January end of month paycheck.

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) — Soldiers who see extra money in their mid-month January paychecks shouldn't spend it.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service made an error that will cause about 53,000 Soldiers to be paid too much in January. The Army will collect the funds from end-of-month paychecks to restore financial balance.

Most of the affected Soldiers will receive overpayments of between \$200 and \$500.

When the Army "draws back" the overpayments, it will take back the overpayments of \$500 and more in two installments, officials said, to reduce

any potential hardship for Soldiers.

Those who received less than \$500 extra will see the drawback in the January end of the month paycheck, Col. Kenneth Crowder, director of Army Pay Operations for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, said those affected are Soldiers who have Army meal cards, but who are authorized for reimbursement for some meals.

Crowder said an incorrect date entered into a computer database caused the error. He said DFAS was changing to the new rate for meal reimbursements, when a data entry error backdated the change to 2004.

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Lending a helping hand

by Sgt. 1st Class Terry Goodman
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With temperatures dipping below freezing and snow filling the skies, nothing may be more important than having a good, warm coat. Unfortunately, for some of the homeless in northern Virginia, facing the elements wearing nothing more than a shirt and maybe a sweater is more common than it should be.

This past holiday season, more than 50 people received winter coats donated by U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command Soldiers, civilians and contractors through New Hope Housing. They were delivered by Frank Hadley, a systems administrator in the Directorate of Contracting, Dec. 21, just in time for Christmas and colder temperatures.

Hadley said a few people in his section began collecting coats as an internal project the first week of November. However, as news of the project began to spread, people from other sections also wanted to contribute.

"We had a lot better turnout than I or anyone expected," said the retired staff sergeant, who cleaned out his closets to support the effort. "It always makes you feel good to do something like this. We also had other items donated, including pants, sweaters and blankets."

Since 1977, New Hope Housing has provided both



photo by Sgt. 1st Class Terry Goodman

Frank Hadley loads up his truck with boxes of coats to donate Dec. 21.

long-term and temporary housing for individuals and families in 14 different facilities throughout the northern Virginia region. The non-profit organization also provides the residence with life-skills training through its Out of Poverty program, which addresses the emotional and behavioral changes necessary for residents to reach a manageable level of self-sufficiency.

New Hope does not have a clothing closet nor storage space at Kennedy for donated clothing. Items that are not immediately needed at Kennedy are taken to the family shelter. Any remaining items are taken to the clothing closet at Rising Hope.

Chris Bonifant, community

outreach and volunteer coordinator, New Hope Housing, said the coats were distributed by case managers or resident managers to individuals who needed them the most.

"From the beginning, New Hope Housing has existed because of the generosity of individuals and groups within our community who recognized the need to do something to help the truly needy in our area," said Bonifant. "The Fort Belvoir community has always been wonderfully supportive of New Hope Housing, particularly the Eleanor Kennedy Shelter. Residents are always grateful for assistance and a coat in this cold weather was truly appreciated."



photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Cuomo

The United States Army is looking for highly motivated service members to fill its Warrant Officer ranks. Positions are open in all 45 specialties. Applicants with less than 12 years active federal service are encouraged to apply. For more information, go to: www.usarec.army.mil/warrant.

INSCOM EEO: help wanted

The U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command Equal Employment Opportunity Office is looking for volunteers to participate in several Command Special Emphasis Programs.

Those personnel interested, will perform collateral duties in programs such as Federal Women's Program, Hispanic Employment Program, Black Employment Program, Individuals with Disabilities Program, Native American/Alaskan Native Employment Program, and the Asian/Pacific American

Employment Program.

"These collateral positions are the very heart of the EEO Program," said Brady Jones, command EEO director.

"They are the people that make these programs work. Individuals participating as program managers earn valuable program management experience, receive training in EEO and Special Emphasis Programs, and attend training conferences."

According to Brady, responsibilities of the collateral positions of Special Emphasis Program personnel will be to

assist the Command EEO Office in accomplishing affirmative employment within the command with sponsored ethnic observances designed to enhance cross-cultural awareness among the workforce.

The Special Emphasis Program observances are authorized and required by regulations to enhance employment opportunities and relationships among targeted groups.

For more information, contact Brady Jones at (703) 428-4648.

Army addresses barracks

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) — Soldiers living in barracks will see big improvements beginning this spring as the Army's Installation Management Agency begins to execute a \$250 million program to identify and upgrade the Army's most deficient barracks.

The funding was made available as a short-term fix to improve 177 barracks that were identified as "red," or substandard under the Installation Status Report. The plan is to upgrade those facilities from red to amber within a year.

"This funding gives IMA one more way to improve quality of life for our Soldiers," said Philip E. Sakowitz, deputy director of the Installation Management Agency. "It's not the end of the story, of course, and our plan is to spend about \$260 million a year to sustain barracks

facilities."

Sakowitz said IMA has been steadily building and renovating barracks under a long-term \$10 billion program. In the past two years, many barracks upgrades have been accomplished while units are deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

"Now we can tackle the barracks that need the most attention first," Sakowitz said.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston said the Army's goal is to take care of Soldiers.

"We're already taking good care of our Soldiers, this gives us a chance to do it better," Preston said. "The American Soldier deserves the highest standard of living whether they're married or single. The barracks isn't just room and board to our single Soldiers, it's their home."

George Lloyd, a strategic planner for Unaccompanied Personnel Housing, said the Army has identified 177 barracks buildings that require changes. He uses the medical term "triage" in which the most serious cases are treated first.

"We'll be working on those facilities that need the most work beginning in April 2005, and hope to finish up by September 2006," Lloyd said.

He said the Army has allotted about \$250 million a year, above its normal building and maintenance budget, to the improvement program.

During the renovation process, some Soldiers will be moved out of barracks and off post. Those most likely to be affected during the renovations are "geographic bachelors" -- Soldiers at locations remote from their families.

Looking for a few good spouses

ALEXANDRIA, VA, — The National Military Family Association announced that applications are being accepted for the NMFA's Joanne Holbrook Patton Military Spouse Scholarship Program. The scholarships are awarded to uniformed services spouses (active, retired, reserve, guard or survivor) to obtain professional certification or to attend post secondary or graduate school for an academic year.

Scholarships are normally in the amount of \$1,000. The scholarship funds may be used to assist with tuition, fees, books, and school room and board, so long as the funds are paid directly to the educational institution involved. The 2005 Awards were made possible through a donation from General Dynamics and several individual donors. Applications are only accepted online and are due on March 31.

NMFA recognizes that the military lifestyle presents unique challenges to military spouses. Frequent moves can interfere with military spouses' ability to complete their post secondary education, thus negatively impacting their professional development and long-term career progression. NMFA's military spouse scholarship program is one step toward helping military spouses gain the education that they need to reach their full career potential.